

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Application Serial No. 10/635,618
Attorney Docket No. Q76690

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (withdrawn): A method of electronically coupling rail vehicles in stop areas of in short-distance rail transport systems, wherein a rail vehicle with zero speed or with a speed below a predetermined minimum speed transmits a message which contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar for a following rail vehicle, and that after reception of the message from the rail vehicle ahead, the following rail vehicle approaches the rail vehicle ahead up to a predetermined distance.

Claim 2 (withdrawn): A method as set forth in claim 1, wherein after approaching the rail vehicle ahead up to the predetermined distance, the following rail vehicle is operated by means of the propulsion and braking control information received from the rail vehicle ahead.

Claim 3 (currently amended): Apparatus for electronically coupling rail vehicles in stop areas of stopping points in short-distance rail transport systems, wherein a control unit and a transceiver unit are provided which are interconnected, and that the control unit is designed to determine the speed of a rail vehicle ahead and, if the speed is zero or below a predetermined minimum speed, to control the transceiver unit in such a way as to transmit a message which

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contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar for a following rail vehicle,

wherein the transceiver unit is designed to transmit a message received from the rail vehicle ahead, containing the propulsion and braking control information, to the control unit, and that the control unit is so designed that after reception of the message from the rail vehicle ahead and after approach to the rail vehicle ahead up to a predetermined distance, the control unit controls the following rail vehicle in such a way that the following rail vehicle is operated by the propulsion and braking control information received from the rail vehicle ahead.

Claim 4 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein a distance sensor is provided which is connected to the control unit, that the distance sensor is arranged and designed to measure the distance to a following the following rail vehicle and to transfer the measurement result to the control unit, and that the control unit is designed to compare the measurement result with a maximum value and to stop the transmission of the message if the measurement result exceeds the maximum value.

Claim 5 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein a distance sensor is provided which is connected to the control unit, that the distance sensor is arranged and designed to measure the distance to a following the following rail vehicle and to transfer the measurement result to the control unit, and that the control unit is designed to compare the measurement result with a minimum value or with a predetermined or communicated distance

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and to stop the transmission of the message if the measurement result is less than the minimum value or not equal to the distance.

Claim 6 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the transceiver unit is designed to ~~transfer~~transmit a received platform exit signal or information on the reception of this signal to the control unit, and that the control unit is designed to stop the transmission of the message after reception of the platform exit signal or of the information thereon.

Claim 7 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the transceiver unit is designed to ~~transfer~~transmit a received platform entry signal or information on the reception of this signal to the control unit, and that the control unit is so designed that after reception of the platform entry signal or the information thereon and if a zero speed was determined, it controls the transceiver unit to transmit a message which contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar for the other rail vehicle.

Claim 8 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein the transceiver unit is designed to ~~transfer~~transmit a message received from the following rail vehicle or information on the reception of this message to the control unit, and that the control unit is so designed that after reception of the message from the following rail vehicle or of the information

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thereon and if a zero speed or a speed below a predetermined minimum speed was determined, it controls the transceiver unit to transmit a message which contains propulsion and braking control information for the other rail vehicle.

Claim 9 (currently amended): Apparatus for electronically coupling rail vehicles in stop areas in short-distance rail transport systems, wherein a control unit and a transceiver unit are provided which are interconnected, that the transceiver unit is designed to transfer-transmit a message received from a rail vehicle ahead or information on the reception of this message to the control unit, and that the control unit is so designed that after reception of the message from the rail vehicle ahead or of the information thereon, if the control unit controls the following a following rail vehicle in such a way that if the following rail vehicle approaches the rail vehicle ahead up to a predetermined distance or a minimum value,

wherein the transceiver unit is designed to transmit a message received from the rail vehicle ahead, containing propulsion and braking control information, to the control unit, and that the control unit is so designed that after reception of the message from the rail vehicle ahead and after the approach to the rail vehicle ahead up to the predetermined distance, the control unit controls the following rail vehicle in such a way that the following rail vehicle is operated by means of the propulsion and braking control information received from the rail vehicle ahead.

Claim 10 (original): Apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein the control unit is so designed that after reception of the message from the rail vehicle ahead or of the information

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thereon, it controls the transceiver unit to transmit a message which contains ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar for the rail vehicle ahead.

Claim 11 (currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein a distance sensor is provided which is connected to the control unit, that the distance sensor is arranged and designed to measure the distance to the rail vehicle ahead and to ~~transfer~~transmit the measurement result to the control unit, and that the control unit is designed to compare the measurement result with a minimum value or a predetermined distance and to control the rail vehicle in such a way that it approaches the rail vehicle ahead up to the minimum value or the predetermined distance at the most.

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (withdrawn): A computer program for a control unit for electronically coupling rail vehicles in stop areas in short-distance rail transport systems, wherein at zero speed or at a speed below a predetermined minimum speed, a message is generated which contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar for a following rail vehicle.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): A computer program for a control unit for electronically coupling rail vehicle in stop areas in short-distance rail transport systems, wherein upon reception of a

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message from a rail vehicle ahead, containing propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating an electronic drawbar, control signals are generated for controlling the following rail vehicle in such a way that it approaches the rail vehicle ahead up to a predetermined distance.

Claim 15 (new): An apparatus for electronically coupling a plurality of vehicles, the apparatus comprising:

a control unit which receives a message including propulsion and braking information of a first vehicle; and

a transceiver interconnected with the control unit which transmits the message which is received from the first vehicle to a second vehicle which is following the first vehicle,

wherein the control unit determines whether the second vehicle is within a predetermined distance of the first vehicle and activates an electronic drawbar which controls propulsion and braking of the second vehicle with the propulsion and braking information which is received from the first vehicle if the control unit determines that the second vehicle is within the predetermined distance of the first vehicle.

Claim 16 (new): The apparatus of claim 15, where the control unit determines the speed of the first vehicle and, if the speed is zero or below a predetermined minimum speed, the control unit controls the transceiver to transmit a message which contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating the electronic drawbar for the second vehicle.

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Claim 17 (new): The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a distance sensor which is connected to the control unit, wherein the distance sensor measures a distance from the first vehicle to the second vehicle and transmits the distance which is measured to the control unit, and the control unit compares the distance with a minimum value or a predetermined distance and controls the second vehicle to approach the first vehicle up to the minimum value or the predetermined distance.

Claim 18 (new): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the transceiver unit transmits a received platform exit signal, and the control unit stops transmission of the message after reception of the platform exit signal.

Claim 19 (new): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the transceiver unit transmits a received platform entry signal to the control unit, and that the control unit controls the transceiver unit to transmit the message which contains propulsion and braking control information or ready signals for activating the electronic drawbar for the second vehicle if the platform entry signal is received and a zero speed is determined.

Claim 20 (new): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the first vehicle is a rail vehicle and the second vehicle is a rail vehicle which is following the first vehicle on a track.